Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC
Phone 646-549-4694 | Fax 646-558-4238
JMPankoNP@JeffreyPanko.com
jeffreypanko.com

PATIENT EDUCATION

Suvorexant

Belsomra / Oral tablets

A guide for adults taking suvorexant.
Follow the directions on your prescription and your provider's recommendations.

ADULT INSOMNIA | TABLETS: 5, 10, 15, 20 MG • SCHEDULE IV

Formulations: Oral tablets are taken once nightly at the prescribed dose. Higher doses can increase next-day impairment.

What it is used for

Suvorexant treats adult insomnia involving difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. It is a controlled medication and should be part of a plan that also addresses the causes of persistent insomnia.

How it works

It blocks orexin receptors that support wakefulness. This can help sleep but can also reduce daytime alertness or cause unusual sleep-related experiences.

What to expect over time

Sleep may improve from the first few nights. Review persistent insomnia rather than increasing doses yourself. Keep a brief record of bedtime, awakenings, wake time, and next-day alertness.

Taking your medication

- Take within 30 minutes of bedtime only when at least seven hours remain before you need to be active.
- Food, especially a substantial meal, can delay the effect.
- Skip a missed bedtime dose rather than taking it late. Never take a second dose the same night.
- Avoid driving when drowsy; impairment can occur even if you do not feel fully aware of it.

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Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Sleepiness, headache, or dizziness
- Vivid dreams or nightmares
- Next-day impairment or falls

Keeping track of treatment

Some side effects resolve with time; others may require a change of medication. Discuss persistent or bothersome side effects with your provider.

Watch for next-day drowsiness and unusual nighttime behavior. Ask someone close to you to mention events you may not remember.

Sleep paralysis, vivid experiences while falling asleep or waking, and brief leg weakness can occur. Report these symptoms.

If you take too much

For a suspected overdose, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** immediately, even if you feel well. Call 911 for a seizure, collapse, trouble breathing, or inability to wake.

Before you start

Do not use with narcolepsy. Discuss sleep apnea, breathing problems, liver disease, falls, depression, and previous unusual sleep behavior.

Discuss pregnancy, pregnancy plans, and breastfeeding with your provider. Treatment decisions should consider both the medication and the condition being treated.

Medicines and interactions

Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Have new medications checked before taking them.

Avoid alcohol and do not combine with another insomnia medicine unless your provider has specifically reviewed the plan. Opioids and other sedatives increase impairment.

Some antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, and seizure medicines change drug levels. Review grapefruit and all new medicines.

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Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Call 911 for slow breathing, inability to wake, or a severe allergic reaction.

Prompt medical advice. Stop the medication and contact your provider immediately after sleepwalking, sleep-driving, or other activities while not fully awake. Report worsening depression or disturbing sleep-related experiences.

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm, call 911 or go to an emergency department.

Your questions answered

Can I take it if I have only a few hours to sleep?
No. Follow the full sleep window in your prescription; taking it too late increases next-day impairment.

Does medication replace insomnia treatment?
No. Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) addresses sleep habits and patterns that medication alone may not resolve.

Everyday tips

Keep a consistent wake-up time and allow adequate sleep.

Avoid driving or dangerous work when drowsy, even if you think you slept enough.

Storage and safety

Keep medication in its labeled container, away from excess heat and moisture and out of reach of children and pets. Do not share it. Ask a pharmacy about disposal of unused medication.

Sources

Official prescribing information: suvorexant

Educational handout; does not replace your prescription or provider's recommendations.